

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method to retrieve information that contains name and relationship information, the method comprising:

accepting input from a user to create a search request that contains a plurality of text characters, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a name identifier, and wherein
5 one or more of the text characters specify a relationship to the name identifier;

using the search request to retrieve search results, wherein each search result contains the name identifier, and wherein each search result also contains information representing the specified relationship to the name identifier; and

displaying to the user the name identifier for each search result in textual form.

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2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises displaying to the user information representing the specified relationship to the name identifier for each search result in textual form.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises using the search request to retrieve search results from an external database system.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the external database system contains additional information.

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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises using the search request to retrieve search results from a memory.

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6. The method of claim 1, wherein if no search results contain the name identifier and information representing the specified relationship to the name identifier, the method comprises using the search request to retrieve search results that each contain the name identifier.

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7. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a second name identifier, and wherein the method comprises using the search request to retrieve search

results that each contain the second name identifier and information representing the specified relationship between the name identifier and the second name identifier.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the second name identifier is a personal name identifier, wherein the specified relationship is a contact relationship, and wherein the name identifier is an organizational identifier.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a third name identifier, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a second relationship between the second name identifier and the third name identifier, and wherein the method comprises using the search request to retrieve search results that each contain the third name identifier and information representing the second specified relationship between the second name identifier and the third name identifier.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a third name identifier, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a second relationship between the first name identifier and the third name identifier, and wherein the method comprises using the search request to retrieve search results that each contain the third name identifier and information representing the second specified relationship between the first name identifier and the third name identifier.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the third name identifier is a location name identifier, and wherein the second specified relationship is a location relationship.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the name identifier contains a wildcard character.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the specified relationship is a working business relationship to the name identifier.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the specified relationship is a location relationship to the name identifier.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the name identifier is a location name identifier, an organizational name identifier, or a personal name identifier.

5 16. A machine-readable medium containing executable instructions contained therein for performing a method to retrieve information that contains name and relationship information, the method comprising:

accepting input from a user to create a search request that contains a plurality of text characters, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a name identifier, and wherein
10 one or more of the text characters specify a relationship to the name identifier;

using the search request to retrieve search results, wherein each search result contains the name identifier, and wherein each search result also contains information representing the specified relationship to the name identifier; and

displaying to the user the name identifier for each search result in textual form.

15 17. A system for retrieving information that contains name and relationship information, the system being operable to:

accept input from a user to create a search request that contains a plurality of text characters, wherein one or more of the text characters specify a name identifier, and wherein
20 one or more of the text characters specify a relationship to the name identifier;

use the search request to retrieve search results, wherein each search result contains the name identifier, and wherein each search result also contains information representing the specified relationship to the name identifier; and

display to the user the name identifier for each search result in textual form.

25 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the system is operable to use the search request to retrieve search results from an external database system.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the system is operable to use the search request to
30 retrieve search results from a memory located within the system.

20. A machine-readable medium containing a data structure contained therein that includes name and relationship information, the data structure comprising:

a first name identifier having one or more text characters;

a second name identifier having one or more text characters; and

5 a relationship having one or more text characters and being used to specify a relationship between the first and second name identifiers.

21. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the first name identifier, the second name identifier, and the relationship are all provided in a single text-entry field.

10 22. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the first name identifier is a location name identifier, an organizational name identifier, or a personal name identifier.

23. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the second name identifier is a
15 location name identifier, an organizational name identifier, or a personal name identifier.

24. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the relationship is a contact relationship or a location relationship.

20 25. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the first name identifier contains a wildcard character.

26. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the second name identifier contains a wildcard character.

25 27. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the data structure further comprises:

a third name identifier having one or more text characters; and

30 an additional relationship having one or more text characters and being used to specify a relationship between the second and third name identifiers.

28. The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the data structure further comprises:

a third name identifier having one or more text characters; and

an additional relationship having one or more text characters and being used to

5 specify a relationship between the first and third name identifiers.